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DATE: 8 APR 70

SECRETARIAT DISSEMINATION

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TO SAIGON

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1. REFS PROVIDE HELPFUL INSIGHT INTO US MISSION THINKING RE CURRENT CAMBODIAN DEVELOPMENTS. WE ENDORSE YOUR REF A COMMENT THAT REF B SHOWS SCARS OF COORDINATION PROCESS. WE WOULD APPRECIATE PRECIS OF EXCISED ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS OR IDENTIFICATION OF ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ BACK CHANNEL MESSAGE BY WHICH BUNKER SENT THEM TO WASHINGTON.

2. PARAS 17 AND 18 REF B STRIKE US AS UNDERPLAYING A MOST IMPORTANT POINT. IN 7 APRIL SESSION WITH SECRETARY LAIRD AND OTHER CONVERSATIONS DOWNTOWN IN RECENT DAYS, I HAVE ARGUED FOLLOWING THESIS: IN THIS ^(THCOW) U'S EYES CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF VC/NVA SANCTUARIES IN CAMBODIA (AND, TO LESSER EXTENT, LAOS) WILL

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INEVITABLY LIMIT SUCCESS OF EVEN OPTIMUM INTERNAL VIETNAMIZATION PROGRAM. REGARDLESS OF PROGRESS THAT MIGHT BE ACHIEVED IN STRENGTHENING SOUTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY AND POLICE STRUCTURE AND IMPROVING INTERNAL POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, TRUE INTERNAL SECURITY WILL REMAIN UNATTAINABLE SO LONG AS COMMUNISTS CAN BUILD AND STATION LARGE MILITARY FORCES IN SANCTUARIES CLOSE TO MAJOR SOUTH VIETNAMESE POPULATION CENTERS, FORCES THAT CAN ALWAYS SALLY FORTH AT TIMES AND PLACES OF HANOI'S CHOOSING. THIEU HAS MADE THIS POINT TO MANY PEOPLE OVER THE PAST YEAR. HE PITCHED IT VERY STRONGLY TO ME DURING OUR CONVERSATION LAST NOVEMBER.

3. THINKING AS HE DOES, GIVEN HIS OWN PERSONAL OUTLOOK AND TEMPERAMENT, AND GIVEN THE FACT THAT, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THIEU SEES HIMSELF AS THE CUSTODIAN OF SOUTH VIETNAM'S NATIONAL INTERESTS (NOT ANYONE ELSE'S), THIEU COULD HARDLY AVOID VIEWING POST-18 MARCH EVENTS IN CAMBODIA AS A HEAVEN-SENT WINDFALL THAT

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SOUTH VIETNAM SIMPLY CANNOT AFFORD TO SQUANDER. FOR A BRIEF TIME AT LEAST, HANOI'S CAMBODIAN SANCTUARIES AND THE COMMUNIST FORCES THEREIN -- I.E., THE REALLY SERIOUS LONG RANGE INTERNAL SECURITY THREAT TO SOUTH VIETNAM -- ARE NO LONGER IMMUNE TO HARASSMENT. WHILE THIS SUN SHINES, THIEU IS GOING TO MAKE SOME HAY. HE MAY MAKE IT QUIETLY, BUT HE IS GOING TO MAKE IT NONETHELESS.

4. IN SHORT, I HAVE ARGUED THAT WHATEVER MESSAGES OR INSTRUCTIONS AMBASSADOR BUNKER MAY RELAY FROM WASHINGTON, AND WHATEVER THIEU MAY SAY TO THE AMBASSADOR IN RETURN, THE GVN IS NOT GOING TO TURN A DEAF EAR TO FARK UNITS' REQUESTS FOR HELP IN FIGHTING AN AT LEAST TEMPORARILY COMMON ENEMY, NOR IS THE GVN GOING TO PASS UP ANY REALLY PROMISING CHANCE TO GET IN A FEW LICKS ON ITS OWN. THIEU'S ATTITUDES ON THIS MATTER (SHARED BY HIS SENIOR COLLEAGUES, PARTICULARLY THOSE WITHIN THE GVN'S MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT) ARE SHAPED BY FACTORS AND CONSIDERATIONS

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NOT SUBJECT TO US CONTROL AND SHOULD BE ACKNOWLEDGED AS
GIVENS IN ANY CURRENT US POLITICAL CALCULATIONS.

5. I WOULD WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS ON THE ABOVE LINE OF
REASONING AND WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IF WE READ THIEU (AND THE GVN)
THE SAME WAY.

END OF MESSAGE

*Calls Saigon [] to attention of Hqs. as the final version of
Mission assessment of events in Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam as of 7 Apr.

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George A. Carver, Jr.
SAVA
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